

## The Best Damn School ...

In June 1915, Allan Blackledge was approaching his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday as a graduating senior and BMOC at Red Cloud High School, Red Cloud, Nebraska. His girlfriend Irma was the prettiest girl in the school, and he was Captain of the Football Team. His father the Judge was delivering the commencement address. Life was good. It would get worse and it would get better. His plans for the future ensured more ups and downs: seeking an appointment to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

Allan and the Judge applied to a Congressman for an appointment, and inserted Allan into a Prep School in Annapolis. Almost certainly it was the US Naval Academy Preparatory School operated by Robert Lincoln Wertz, USNA class of 1884. In April 1916, after several months of Prep School preparation, Allan underwent the grueling 3-day Entrance Exam for the Academy. Jennifer Bryan of the Nimitz Library at the Academy found a copy of the Exam and ADB's results:

The size and condition of the Report of the Examination of Candidates for April 1916 precludes copying. I can provide you with the information recorded for your father. The candidates are listed alphabetically. Following are the heads of columns on the report, from left to right [and] the information for your father:

:

Appointed From  
(State/Dist.[District])/P.

Name; Age (Year/Month); [Principal]/A.[Alternate];  
**Blackledge, A.D.; 19** [years] **9** [months]; **Neb. 5 P.**;

Marks In (Eng./Geog./Hist./Arith./Alg./Geom.); Deficient In; Results.  
English **2.7**/Geography **3.1**/History **3.5**/Arithmetic **3.3**/Algebra  
**3.6**/Geometry **2.6**  
[2.5 was the passing mark]/[not deficient in any subject]/ **Passed.**

A total of 1216 candidates took the April 1916 examination; 452 passed, 764 were rejected.

Fairly elite company. The Red Cloud newspaper reported these results as follows: